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## Shore Patrol: Letter campaign supports breakwater reconfiguration

By Joe Segura, Staff Writer

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A recent nudge by Councilman Robert Garcia generated nearly 700 letters in one week supporting reconfiguration of the Long Beach Breakwater.

"What a great way for our city to show its support for clean water and world-class beaches!" said Garcia, who launched the letter campaign to demonstrate local support for the proposed reconfiguration.

Councilman Patrick O'Donnell has also been involved in a letter campaign, working with the Surfrider Foundation Long Beach Chapter. However, he said there was no formal counting system in place, and he estimates the effort in February generated a couple of hundred letters.

The proposed breakwater reconfiguration project - formally known as the East San Pedro Bay Ecosystem Restoration Study - is being reviewed by the Army Corps of

Engineers, which could announce in the next few weeks an official decision on federal interest to move forward with a feasibility study.

The breakwater is a federal structure which was originally built for the naval base. Since its closure, however, numerous advocacy groups have asserted that reconfiguring the breakwater can improve water quality, enhance recreation opportunities and increase economic benefits to the city through improved tourism opportunities.

The City Council voted to undertake a reconnaissance study of the breakwater in order to determine federal interest in its reconfiguration.

City Hall planners expect to return to the Council in mid-June with a full public presentation of the Army Corps' review, and have staff provide options on how to meet the city's 50 percent share of the feasibility study cost.

Tom Modica, manager of Government Affairs, noted that the city's share is about \$4 million over four years, if the City Council should choose to become the local sponsor.

The city planners have also been working on the city's project management plan,

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attempting to identify the potential steps of a feasibility study, and what areas of work the city might be able to provide, Modica said.

The numbers have been provided by Moffatt and Nichol, the local engineering firm that's been a consultant for the city on the breakwater project. And the Army Corps is reviewing the city planners preliminary figures, Modica added.

"These numbers will change as we work with the Army Corps to determine what the scope of their study will be and what we might be able to get credit for," Modica added.

The link to the project management plan:  
<http://www.longbeach.gov/civica/filebank/blobdload.asp?BlobID=23111>

Meanwhile, Councilman Patrick O'Donnell is spearheading three free events related to "Breakwater Awareness Month":

- May 13: "Big Thursday," 6-8 p.m. at Shelter Surf Shop, 2148 E. Fourth St., a multi-media breakwater exhibit, providing a social forum for breakwater advocates.

- May 22: "A Paddle Out in Memory of the Waves," 10-11:30 a.m., the beach at Ocean Boulevard and Granada Avenue, O'Donnell

will host a surfing paddle out at the beach, commemorating the breakwater's effect on wave and tidal activity. Local surfers and residents are encouraged to attend this event with their surfboards, and paddle out as a group in support of interest in the Breakwater Study. The events will culminate in a community meeting in which Tom Modica with the City's Government Affairs office, will provide a review and update of the reconnaissance study.

- May 24: "Breakwater Study Community Meeting," 7-8:30 p.m. at Ecco's Pizza, 2123 Bellflower Blvd.

For more details, contact O'Donnell's office at 562.570-6918.

"These are three great events for one great cause," said O'Donnell. "I have long been an advocate of studying this issue as a means to clean our water, restore our shore and improve our local beach economy."

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